

COMMITTEES

- Beaver Dam Creek Tributary Restoration Task Force
- Cornell University's Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center—Advisory Council
- Earth Team Coordinator
- Long Island Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Working Group
- Long Island Agricultural Forum Planning Committee
- Long Island Regional Envirothon
- Long Island Weed Management Area Working Group
- Lower Hudson Long Island Resource Conservation & Development Council
- National Envirothon
- New York State Conservation District Employees Association
- New York State Envirothon
- Peconic Estuary Technical Advisory Committee
- Suffolk County Department of Health Services Peconic River Project
- Suffolk County Vector Control Long Range Planning Committee
- Suffolk County Water Quality Protection & Restoration—Review Committee
- South Shore Estuary Reserve
- Southampton College's Environmental Education Advisory Board



Allan Connell nominated the SWCD staff for assisting in the administration and implementation of various Farm Bill programs. We all received framed certificates and commemorative awards of \$100 each. Thanks All!



Recommended remediation site listed in the South Shore Estuary Plan Phase II Report.

SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY

The Suffolk County Legislators directed SWCD to establish a Stormwater Remediation Program for the South Shore Tributaries including; Sampawams Creek, Santapogue Creek, Carlls River, Orowoc Creek, Patchogue River, Connetquot River and Champlin Creek. The written plan identifies stormwater runoff sites located on town, village and county owned properties and includes remediation suggestions. Many of the sites identified are being targeted by the Towns and Villages and funded through the Suffolk County Tax Water Quality Protection and Restoration Program.

OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP

SWCD and the DEC co-sponsored organizing the Clean Sweep Program, which removed approximately 140,000 pounds of obsolete chemicals from farms in Suffolk County. "Concern about aged and leaking pesticides has become a national environmental threat," said a spokesperson for the DEC. "This project was the most intensive effort of its kind in New York State." Farmers anonymously registered their unwanted chemicals in advance, then brought them to one of five designated collection sites set up in the county. This \$250,000 project was funded by the DEC who acquired the money from a lawsuit settlement against a chemical manufacturer.

Many of the chemicals, dropped off by farmers, were banned for use in Suffolk County years ago. Farmers had little recourse other than storing the pesticides on their farms. After the Environmental Protection Agency approves chemicals for distribution in the United States, manufacturers make them available. Once on the market, farmers have the opportunity to purchase the pesticides. However, the DEC occasionally intervenes and bans new pesticides for use in Suffolk County. The chemicals become illegal to use or discard and manufacturers refuse to take them back. By participating in the Clean Sweep program, farmers were able to clean out all illegal chemicals without worrying about legal consequences. Arrangements were made to pick up unstable containers directly at individual farms. It was a win-win situation for all sides.



Farmer spraying

ADDITIONAL 2003 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the above, SWCD staff assisted 342 landowners 1,253 times in various conservation efforts including preparing agricultural tax exemption forms, determining soil types, making recommendations, giving out informational materials and showing aerial maps of property dating from the present back to 1954. We assisted in the installation of 41 Best Management Practices and completed 53 Inventory and Evaluation reports. We helped many local, county, state and federal governmental agencies in technical support for environmental efforts on 237 occasions in 2003, in all ten townships, which include: Brookhaven, Babylon, East Hampton, Huntington, Islip, Shelter Island, Smithtown, Southampton, Southold, and Riverhead.



Bluff erosion site in Smithtown.

Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District

Board of Directors

George Proios
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Member at Large

Brian X. Foley
Director
County Legislator

Lloyd Corwin
Director
Practical Farmer

Joe Gergela
Director
L.I. Farm Bureau

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Board Treasurer

Elizabeth Condon
Sr. Account Clerk/Typist

Paul TeNyenhuis
Sr. District Technician

Sharon Frost
District Technician

Nicole Spinelli
District Technician

Polly Weigand
District Technician

USDA-NRCS

Allan Connell
District Conservationist

Brian Zimmerman
Soil Technician



Chairman George Proios was appointed by Governor Pataki to the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee. He is the first non-farmer and the first Long Islander to be appointed to this prestigious committee.



Director Joe Gergela was reelected, for a sixth term, as President of the New York Association of Conservation Districts. The Association is a non-governmental, non-partisan organization that advocates for county Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

YEAR 2 IN REVIEW

\$260,000 STATE GRANT MONEY

Facing steep competition for grant dollars, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is pleased to announce that we were awarded four separate grants from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), totaling over \$260 thousand dollars.

"The South Shore and Peconic Estuaries have tremendous ecological, economic and social importance to our way of life here in Suffolk County. The funding from these grants will greatly assist us in our continuing efforts to improve and protect the health of the estuaries' ecosystems," said George Proios SWCD Board Chairperson.

Two of the grants, funded through the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, are for water quality projects, which will help improve impaired water in the South Shore Estuary. The first project involved the construction of a waterway and filter strip on a farm adjacent to Beaverdam Creek, which was completed in September.

"Establishing a grassed waterway and vegetated filter strip between the creek and farm's edge will help improve the quality of stormwater runoff entering the estuary by filtering out nutrients, pesticides, and sediments," explained Thomas J. McMahon, SWCD District Manager.

The second project is the implementation of Best Management Practices on a duck farm adjacent to the Forge River, which will reduce the amount of pathogens and nutrients entering Moriches Bay. Best Management Practices are effective methods, measures or practices that prevent or reduce the impact of pollutants generated by Nonpoint Sources.

Two additional grants were awarded under Round IX of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program and will receive funding through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund. The projects include an Irrigation Wellhead Protection Project and the Long Island Agricultural Stewardship Planning Project.

The Irrigation Wellhead Protection Project will provide six farmers with funding for the installation of a secondary fuel storage containment, an impermeable structure large enough to hold 110% of the on-farm fuel volume located near their agricultural irrigation well.

George Proios, Chairperson of the District and a member of the Suffolk County Water Authority Board, stated that "Projects like this will protect our groundwater in case of any accidental spills."

The Long Island Agricultural Stewardship Planning Project will assist the SWCD in implementing the New York State Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) initiative for helping farmers protect the environment while maintaining the viability of their farm operation. This planning project also included the development of new worksheets that address environmental concerns unique to crops grown in Suffolk County. The new worksheets were approved by the State and are already being applied to farms in the development of Conservation Plans.

"Both of these projects are significant as they will assist our farmers in addressing environmental concerns and reduce the potential for pollutants entering the groundwater and Peconic Estuary," said Allan Connell, District Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).



NYS Commissioners Nathan Rudgers Ag & Markets and Erin Crotty DEC visit Beaverdam Creek Farm



Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District • 423 Griffing Avenue • Riverhead, New York 11901 • 631-727-2315



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BEST WISHES GINNY!

The Soil & Water Conservation District says good-bye to friend and former Board Member Ginny Fields. She was appointed soon after beginning her service as County Legislator in 2000. She was a asset to the Board and supported conservation efforts throughout Suffolk County. The District wishes her well.



News 12 Ken Grimball interviews students. 2003 Long Island Envirothon Belmont Lake State Park, Babylon

THE ENVIROTHON...

On April 28th, 2004 the SWCD will be hosting the 6th annual Long Island Regional Envirothon at the St. John’s University in Oakdale. The Envirothon is a environmental studies competition for high school students located in Nassau & Suffolk Counties. They compete in five subject areas: aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soils, and a current issue for a chance to represent their county in the NYS Envirothon in May.



RONNIE GOES SUFFOLK...

SWCD staff plays Ronnie the Raindrop at the New York State Fair in Syracuse this summer. Ronnie poses for photos & passes out water conservation information. He’s quite a drip.

\$747,000 FEDERAL GRANT MONEY

Overcoming intense statewide competition, thirteen privately owned County farms have been chosen to receive over 747,000 dollars in grant money, due to the strong working relationship between the Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The grant money has been awarded through the federally funded Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and will be used to implement Best Management Practices (BMP) on 2,616 acres of farmland.

The purpose of EQIP is to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as a compatible goal between farms and the environment. New York State was approved for 7.9 million dollars through EQIP. The grant stipulations are consistent with the national priorities that include improved water quality, reduction of soil erosion, improved air quality and protection of at-risk species habitat.

The SWCD and NRCS staff worked closely with the farmers to establish farm conservation plans. The plans are instrumental in determining the BMP’s that will best serve everyone.

“This is a perfect example of the positive results that can be achieved by a collaboration between governmental agencies and the community,” said George Proios, Chairman of the District Board of Directors and member of the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee. “One of my goals since being appointed to the State Committee has been to better coordinate the information regarding the many environmental programs that exist at the Federal and State levels to enhance Suffolk’s opportunity to access these funds.”

The grants have been awarded to the following areas:

- In Brookhaven, a duck farm will be receiving over \$87,000 dollars. This farm is a tributary of the Great South Bay. The application of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on this farm will aid in reducing nutrients and pathogens from entering the South Shore Estuary.
- In Riverhead, three farms, totaling 1,116 acres within the Peconic Bay Estuary watershed, will receive over \$270,000 dollars. The BMP’s chosen for implementation on these farms will help improve air quality, water quality and help to reduce soil erosion.
- In Southold, six farms, totaling 1,090 acres, will receive a total of \$282,000 dollars. These farms are located within the Peconic Bay Estuary and Long Island Sound watersheds and the BMPs were selected to provide protection in maintaining the health of the Long Island Sound.
- In East Hampton, two farms will receive a total of \$56,770 dollars. Both farms are organically managed and community supported agriculture. An assortment of BMPs will be applied to a total of 175-acres that will help protect the groundwater.
- In Southampton a 193 acre farm will be receiving over 48,600 dollars. Due to the funding, this farm will be implementing several BMP’s including the installation of an Agrichemical Mixing Facility, which protects the environment by containing on-farm agrichemicals during mixing operations.



Paul TeNyenhuis - SWCD Senior Soil Technician designed this Agrichemical Mixing Facility and supervised the installation. The first for our area.



Access Road being installed on EECO farm in East Hampton. A “Best Management Practice” that helps to control erosion.

\$200,000 AWARD FOR ANIMAL WASTE TREATMENT SYSTEM

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) granted SWCD \$200,000 for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP) on one farm in Riverhead. Funded through the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, an Animal Waste Treatment System is currently under construction, which will improve water quality in Flanders Bay, a tributary to the Peconic Estuary.

The highly competitive and complicated grant process was no match for the SWCD staff.



Phase one of constructing the Animal Waste Treatment System.

drainage system. With the installation of this Animal Waste Treatment System, reopening some of the scallop beds may become a reality.

“The long-term benefits of executing this project will be realized both environmentally and economically for future generations,” said George Proios Chairman of the District Board of Directors. “The District staff should receive recognition for their efforts in supervising a project of this magnitude.”

An extensive study of various treatment technologies, methods of construction and cost feasibility was completed by an outside engineering firm. They determined a sequential batch reactor (SBR) to be the best means of controlling nonpoint source pollution on the farm.

The project consists of building three enormous concrete tanks allowing the wastewater to be treated as it flows through each tank before releasing the effluent water into a constructed wetland. The sealed tanks prevent leaching to groundwater, a problem that has existed in the past. The total estimated cost of this project is approximately \$750,000 with the farmer contributing over \$500,000



Over 110 truck loads of concrete were used to construct tanks.



In 1960 over 50 duck farms were located in eastern Suffolk County. This is one of the 4 remaining today.

Over 600 applications were reviewed by environmental and public health experts from the DEC, in cooperation with the NYS Agriculture and Markets and the Environmental Facilities Corporation. In addition, the project went through a period of public review, as well as evaluation by the appropriate committees and conferences in the Management Plan areas.

Traditionally, the Peconic Estuary sustained the most productive bay scallop beds in New York State. However, due to pathogens and other pollutants from stormwater runoff, the area has experienced year-round shellfish closure. Many remediation projects implemented in the watershed have improved water quality including upgrading the roadway



Rebar being placed before concrete is poured.

SWCD provided services...

Agricultural

- Engineering Practices
- Irrigation Design
- Ag. Value Assessment
- Agronomic Practices
- Erosion Control
- Conservation Planning
- Pest Management Techniques
- Cost-share Programs
- Transition Farming Assistance
- Technical assistance
- Installation Supervision
- Drainage Systems
- Agricultural Waste Systems



Tom McMahon holds a surveyor's rod inside an erosion gully on an orchard in Wading River.

Landowners

- Bluff Erosion
- Recommendations
- Conservation Information
- Educational Materials
- Wildlife Watering Facilities
- Pond Assistance
- Soil Erosion & Drainage
- Soils Information
- Wetland Restoration Program
- Wildlife Management

Education

- Conservation Materials
- Programs Guides

Municipalities

- Nonpoint Source Pollution Remediation
- Site Plan & Subdivision Reviews
- Grant Partnerships

- Watershed Management

Environmental Consultants

- Maps



Nonpoint Source Pollution discovered by a District Technician in Babylon, NY